HAIL! QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Music in honour of the Virgin Mary

The Cambridge Singers + directed by John Rutter

Collegium RECORDS

Hail! Queen of Heaven

This recording, made in the architecturally and acoustically glorious setting of the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral by the twenty-eight unaccompanied mixed voices of the Cambridge Singers, gathers together twenty-one examples of the extraordinary wealth of choral music inspired by the Virgin Mary.

Ever since the early centuries of Christian history, the Virgin Mary has played a significant role in worship. At the Council of Ephesus in 431 she was accorded the title of Mother of God, worthy of veneration above all other saints, and feast days dedicated to her began to appear in the church calendar, the most important being the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Assumption. The musical implications of this are clear: feasts call for specially elaborate music, and so a repertory of Marian music began to develop, especially in monastic institutions, where up to eight acts of worship were held each day. Prominent in this repertory are the four beautiful Antiphons of the Blessed Virgin Mary which frame this recording. These were composed in the turbulent centuries of the Crusades, the ending of which in 1291 marked the start of a period of especially intense devotion to Mary, perhaps in reaction to the violence and bloodshed that had gone before. The building of Lady Chapels in cathedrals and other churches was a notable symbol of this—nowhere more so than at Ely, whose huge and impressive Lady Chapel is virtually a separate structure from the main cathedral, its interior walls covered with stone carvings depicting the life and miracles of the Virgin. Mary became a popular subject of paintings and poetry, often being likened to a rose (an image going back to the Rose of Jericho in Ecclesiasticus); the delicately lovely English carol *There is no rose of such virtue* exemplifies this facet of Marianism at its height in the fifteenth century.

In England, of course, all this changed with the Reformation, when the singing of Marian music and veneration of the image of any saint was brought to an end, although the 1549 Book of Common Prayer did retain the principal feast days of Mary. In Italy and Spain, however, the Reformation had the effect of redoubling Catholic fervour, with the Jesuit order being founded in 1534 and the Council of Trent (1545–63) defining Catholic doctrine and reforming its practice. The church music of Victoria and Guerrero typifies this spirit of Counter-Reformation; and it is easy to see a work like Palestrina's *Stabat Mater* as a musical counterpart to the great Renaissance *pietàs* which made real to the beholder the human grief of Mary at the Cross.

If the influence of the Reformation on the Catholic church was at least partly negative and reactionary, as far as the Orthodox church is concerned it was wholly negligible: Tchaikovsky's and Stravinsky's short hymns to the Virgin remind us of a centuries-old tradition of worship in which she had always been profoundly venerated. In northern Europe, on the other hand, Mary went underground, and it was not until well after the Catholic emancipation of the nineteenth century (given artistic focus in England by the Oxford Movement) that such overtly Marian pieces as Holst's *Ave Maria,* Wood's *Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary* and Howells's *Regina caeli* began to reappear. In Catholic countries, popular devotion to the Virgin was given new impetus by the miraculous apparitions of the nineteenth century (Villette's *Hymne à la Vierge* would not be out of place at Lourdes), while in Protestant countries a more relaxed attitude to Mary has allowed such 'Catholic' (and cross-cultural) manifestations as Giles Swayne's Latin Magnificat based on a Senegalese ploughing-song to take their place in the normally tranquil atmosphere of Anglican Evensong.

Scholars, theologians, believers and non-believers will probably continue to debate the role and significance of the Virgin Mary until the end of time; but music-lovers are free simply to enjoy and be enriched by her marvellous legacy of music. Thus, the pieces heard on this recording, although grouped under four seasonal headings, do not in any sense form a strict liturgical sequence, nor are they ordered chronologically or by nationality. Rather, each piece could be thought of as an individual tile in a mosaic picture of the first-century woman of whom, really, we know so little but who has given inspiration and solace to so many.

JOHN RUTTER

Cet enregistrement, créé dans le splendide cadre architectural et acoustique de la Chapelle Notre-Dame de la Cathédrale de Ely par les 28 voix mixtes non-accompagnées des Cambridge Singers, rassemble 21 exemples de la richesse de musique chorale extraordinaire inspirée par la Vierge Marie.

Dès les premiers siècles de l'histoire chrétienne, la Vierge Marie a joué un rôle important dans la louange. Au Concile d'Ephèse en 413 on lui a accordé le titre de Mère de Dieu,

digne de vénération au-dessus de tous les saints, et des jours de fête lui étant dédiés ont commencé à apparaître dans le calendrier de l'église, les principaux étant l'Annonciation, la Nativité et l'Assomption. Les implications musicales en sont claires: les fêtes exigent une musique spécialement élaborée, et donc un répertoire de musique dédiée à la Vierge Marie commença à se développer en particulier dans les institutions monastiques où il y avait jusque huit cultes par jour.

La beauté des quatre Antiphones de la Sainte Vierge Marie tirés de ce répertoire et formant le cadre de cet enregistrement est frappante. Ceux-ci furent composés au cours des siècles turbulents des Croisades, dont la fin en 1291 marque le commencement d'une période d'intense dévotion à la Vierge Marie, peut-être en réaction à la violence et l'effusion de sang auxquelles elle faisait suite.

La construction de Chapelles Notre-Dame dans les cathédrales et autres églises en est un symbole notable, nulle part ailleurs plus qu'à Ely, dont l'immense et imposante Chapelle Notre-Dame est pratiquement un édifice indépendant de l'ensemble de la cathédrale, ses murs intérieurs recouverts de sculptures de pierre représentant la vie et les miracles de la Vierge. Marie devint un sujet bien-aimé de peintures et de poésie, souvent comparée à la rose (image de la Rose de Jéricho tirée du livre de l'Ecclésiastique). *There is no rose of such virtue*, un charmant et délicat chant de Noël anglais est un exemple typique de cet aspect du culte de la Vierge Marie à son apogée pendant le 15ème siècle.

En Angleterre, évidemment, tout ceci changea lors de la Réformation, qui entraîna la fin des chants dédiés à Marie et la suspension d'adoration d'images de tout saint, bien que le Livre de Prières Courantes de 1549 retint les jours de fête de la Vierge Marie. En Italie et en Espagne, par contre, la Réformation eut pour effet de redoubler la ferveur catholique, l'Ordre des Jésuites étant fondé en 1534 et le Concile de Trente (1545–63) définissant la doctrine catholique et réformant sa pratique. La musique d'Eglise de Victoria et Guerrero typifie cet esprit de Contre-Réformation; et il est facile de voir dans une oeuvre telle le *Stabat Mater* de Palestrina la contrepartie musicale des grandes *pietàs* de la Renaissance qui rendaient vivant le chagrin humain de Marie à la Croix.

Si l'influence de la Réformation sur l'Eglise Catholique fut tout au moins en partie négative et réactionnaire, elle fut tout à fait négligeable en ce qui concerne l'Eglise Orthodoxe: les courts hymnes à la Vierge de Tchaikowsky et Stravinsky nous rappellent une tradition d'adoration vieille de plusieurs siècles où Marie était toujours profondément

vénérée. En Europe du Nord d'un autre côté, on n'entendit plus parler de la Vierge Marie et ce ne fut que bien après l'émancipation catholique du 19ème siècle (le Mouvement d'Oxford lui donnant un focus artistique en Angleterre) que des morceaux ouvertement dédiés à la Vierge Marie commencèrent à réapparaître tels l'*Ave Maria* de Holst, le *Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary* de Wood et le *Regina caeli* de Howells.

Dans les pays catholiques, l'adoration populaire de la Vierge prit un nouvel élan avec les apparitions miraculeuses du 19ème siècle (l'*Hymne à la Vierge* de Villette ne serait pas déplacé à Lourdes). Tandis que l'attitude plus détendue des pays protestants envers Marie a permis à des manifestations "catholiques" (et multi-culturelles) telles que le Magnificat latin de Giles Swayne basé sur une chanson de laboureur du Sénégal de prendre part à l'atmosphère normalement paisible de l'office du soir anglican, l'evensong.

Les savants, théologiens, croyants et non-croyants continueront peut-être de débattre le rôle et l'importance de la Vierge Marie jusqu'à la fin des temps; mais les mélomanes sont libres d'apprécier simplement et d'être enrichis par son merveilleux héritage de musique. Ainsi donc, les morceaux dans cet enregistrement, bien que regroupés sous quatre titres saisonniers, ne forment aucunement une stricte séquence liturgique et ne sont pas rangés par ordre chronologique ou par nationalité. Plus exactement, on pourrait s'imaginer que chaque morceau telle une dalle individuelle, fait partie d'une mosaïque représentant cette femme du 1er siècle sur qui nous ne savons pas grand-chose mais qui offrit à tant d'êtres inspiration et réconfort.

(Traduction: Claire de Burbure Craddock)

Die vorliegende Aufnahme aus der sowohl architektonisch als auch akustisch prachtvollen Marienkapelle der Kathedrale von Ely enthält 21 Stücke, die in ihrer Gesamtheit das außerordentlich breite Spektrum an Chormusik zu Ehren der Jungfrau Maria zeigen. Gesungen werden die Werke ohne Begleitung vom 28köpfigen, gemischten Chor der Cambridge Singers.

Schon früh in der Geschichte des Christentums hat die Jungfrau Maria stets eine wichtige Rolle gespielt. Auf dem Ökumenischen Konzil von Ephesus im Jahre 431 wurde Maria zur Mutter Gottes erklärt, die über allen Heiligen stand. Im Kirchenkalender tauchten

bald Feiertage zu ihren Ehren auf, darunter als die wichtigsten Mariä Verkündigung, Mariä Geburt und Mariä Himmelfahrt.

Die Konsequenzen, die sich daraus für die Musik ergaben, liegen auf der Hand: Feiertage verlangen nach besonders kunstvollen Kompositionen, und so entwickelte sich nach und nach ein Schatz an Werken zu Ehren Marias, der besonders in den klösterlichen Einrichtungen gepflegt wurde, wo man sich täglich bis zu acht Mal zu Gebet und Gesang versammelte.

Herausragend sind dabei die vier herrlichen Wechselgesänge zu Ehren der Heiligen Jungfrau Maria, die den Rahmen dieser Aufnahme bilden. Sie entstanden in den unruhigen Jahrhunderten der Kreuzzüge, deren Ende im Jahre 1291 den Beginn einer Periode besonders inniger Hingabe an Maria markierte, vielleicht als Reaktion auf die blutigen kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen in der Zeit davor.

Der Bau von Marienkapellen in Kathedralen und anderen Kirchen war ein augenfälliges Symbol für diese Entwicklung, auch in Ely, dessen riesige und imposante Marienkapelle praktisch als eigenständige Struktur innerhalb des kirchlichen Gesamtbaus zu betrachten ist. Besonders hervorzuheben sind die Steinskulpturen an den Innenwänden der Kapelle, die das Leben Marias und die von ihr bewirkten Wunder darstellen. Auch in Malerei und Dichtung wurde Maria ein beliebtes Sujet, oft mit einer Rose verglichen, ein Bild, das auf die Rose von Jericho im Buch Jesus Sirach zurückging. Das liebliche englische Lied *There is no rose of such virtue* ist ein Paradebeispiel für diesen Aspekt der Marienverehrung auf ihrem Höhepunkt im 15. Jahrhundert.

Mit der Reformation wurde in England schlagartig alles anders. Vorbei war es mit den Gesängen zu Ehren Marias und der Anbetung jedweden Heiligenbildes, auch wenn im Gebetbuch von 1549 die Hauptfeiertage der Muttergottes beibehalten wurden. In Italien und Spanien führte die Reformation natürlich dazu, daß dort die religiöse Inbrunst der Katholiken nur noch zunahm. Die Bestätigung des Jesuitenordens durch den Papst (1540) und das Trienter Konzil (1545–63), auf dem die Neuformulierung der katholischen Lehre vorgenommen wurde, fallen in diese Zeit.

Die Kirchenmusik von Victoria und Guerrero ist typisch für den Geist der Gegenreformation. So ist ein Werk wie das *Stabat Mater* von Palestrina, dessen Stil übrigens auf dem Trientiner Konzil als offizielles Vorbild der katholischen Kirchenmusik anerkannt wurde, leicht als musikalisches Pendant zu den großen Pietas der Renaissance

zu begreifen, aus denen die ganze Trauer Marias und damit des Menschen über den Tod Jesu am Kreuze zu uns spricht.

War der Einfluß der Reformation auf die katholische Kirche zumindest zum Teil negativ und retardierend, so war er in der Ostkirche praktisch nicht zu spüren: Tschaikowskijs und Strawinskys kurze Hymnen an die Jungfrau Maria erinnern uns lebhaft an die jahrhundertealte Tradition der Marienverehrung in den Ländern des griechisch- und russisch-orthodoxen Glaubens. Im nördlichen Europa hingegen geriet Maria aus dem religiösen Blickfeld. Erst längere Zeit nach der Gleichberechtigung der Katholiken im England des 19. Jahrhunderts, die in der Oxford-Bewegung ihren künstlerischen Ausdruck fand, erschienen wieder Stücke expliziter Marienverehrung wie das *Ave Maria* von Holst, das *Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary* von Wood und Howells *Regina caeli*.

In den katholischen Ländern erhielt die volkstümliche Verehrung der Muttergottes zur selben Zeit erneuten Auftrieb durch die Marienerscheinungen (Villettes *Hymne à la Vierge* zum Beispiel würde durchaus nach Lourdes passen). In den protestantischen Ländern wiederum war es dank einer entspannteren Haltung zu Maria nunmehr möglich, daß auch so "katholische" und transkulturelle Manifestationen der Marienverehrung wie das lateinische Magnificat von Giles Swayne, das auf einem beim Pflügen gesungenen Lied aus Senegal basiert, einen Platz in der normalerweise betont ruhigen Atmosphäre der anglikanischen Abendandacht gefunden haben.

Gelehrte und Theologen, Gläubige und Nichtgläubige werden wohl auch weiterhin und bis ans Ende aller Zeiten Diskurse über die Rolle und die Bedeutung der Jungfrau Maria führen. Musikliebhaber hingegen können sich einfach an dem reichen Schatz der Musik, der zu Ehren der Muttergottes entstanden ist, erfreuen und von ihm bereichern lassen. So bilden die auf dieser Aufnahme vertretenen Stücke, selbst wenn sie unter vier Abschnitten des Kirchenkalenders zusammengefaßt sind, in keiner Weise eine strenge liturgische Reihenfolge. Auch chronologisch oder nach nationalen Gesichtspunkten sind sie nicht geordnet. Vielmehr ist jedes Stück als individuelles Steinchen im großen Mosaik des Bildes dieser einzigartigen Frau zu sehen, von der wir, genau betrachtet, so wenig wissen, die aber für so viele eine nie versiegende Quelle der Liebe und des Trostes ist.

(Übersetzung: Klaus Altmann)

HAIL! QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Music in honour of the Virgin Mary

The Cambridge Singers • directed by John Rutter

Total playing time: 71' 27"

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

Part 1: Advent to Candlemas

1 **Alma Redemptoris Mater** (1' 50") Gregorian chant

2 **Ave Virgo sanctissima** (3' 45") Francisco Guerrero (1528–99)

3 **There is no rose of such virtue** (3' 52") 15th-century English carol
Soprano solo: Caroline Ashton Tenor solo: Andrew Gant

4 **Ave Maria** (for four voices) (1' 48") T. L. de Victoria (1548–1611)

5 **Ave Virgo gloriosa** (1' 58") Richard Dering (*c.* 1580–1630)

Part 2: Candlemas to Holy Week

6 **Ave Regina caelorum** (1' 30") Gregorian chant

7 **Stabat Mater** (8' 08") G. P. da Palestrina (1525–94)

8 **Ave Maria** (3' 10") Anton Bruckner (1824–96)

9 **Laudi alla Vergine Maria** (4' 55") Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

10 **Ave Maria** (1' 56") Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

11 **Dostoino Yest** (2' 18") P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

Part 3: Easter to the Sunday after Pentecost

12 **Regina caeli laetare** (1' 32") Gregorian chant

13 **Regina caeli** (2' 58") Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

14 **Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary** (1' 52") 17th-cent. Italian melody
arranged by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

15 **Hymne à la Vierge** (3' 27") Pierre Villette (1926–98)

16 **Magnificat** (3' 40") Giles Swayne (*b.* 1946)

Part 4: Trinity to Advent

17 **Salve Regina** (2' 23") Gregorian chant

18 **Alleluia, Ave Maria** (4' 15") William Byrd (1543–1623)

19 **Vidi speciosam** (5' 40") T. L. de Victoria

20 **Ave Maria** (4' 15") Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

21 **Ave Maria** (for double choir) (4' 20") T. L. de Victoria

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The Cambridge Singers

Sopranos: Caroline Ashton, Donna Deam, Ruth Gomme, Celia Jackson, Karen Kerslake, Simone Mace, Rachel Platt, Penelope Stow, Clare Wallace, Susanna Watson
Altos: Nicola Barber, Peter Gritton, Phyllida Hancock, Mary Hitch, Frances Jellard, Joanna Maggs
Tenors: John Bowen, Andrew Gant, Paul Gordon, Mark LeBrocq, Angus Smith, Jeremy Taylor
Basses: Bruce Hamilton, Patrick Lee-Browne, James Mure, Daniel Pailthorpe, Charles Pott, Benjamin Thompson

Part 1: Advent to Candlemas

1 **Alma Redemptoris Mater (Gregorian chant)**
(T and B unis.)

The four antiphons of the Blessed Virgin Mary have been described as 'among the most beautiful creations of the late Middle Ages' (Apel, *Gregorian chant*, p. 404). The *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and *Salve Regina* were formerly ascribed to the lame monk Hermannus Contractus (1013–54), but it is now accepted that all four were composed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, the anonymous work of monks or nuns in whose communities they adorned the daily worship and marked out the times and seasons. Despite being called antiphons, these four unusually extended and melodious chants were not sung in conjunction with psalms or canticles but were used to bring the daily Offices, especially Vespers and Compline, to a close. The *Alma* was sung from Advent to Candlemas, the *Ave Regina caelorum* from Candlemas to Holy Week, *Regina caeli laetare* from the Eve of Easter Day to the week after Pentecost, and the *Salve Regina* from then till Advent.

Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia caeli porta manes et stella maris, succurre cadenti surgere qui curat populo: Tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem: Virgo prius et posterius Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.
(Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

(Kind Mother of the Redeemer, our open gateway to heaven and star of the sea, help your people and keep them from falling: you who gave birth to your holy Son, all creation marvelling: ever Virgin Mother, first hailed from the lips of Gabriel, have mercy on us sinners.)

2 **Ave Virgo sanctissima (Francisco Guerrero, 1528–99)**
(SSATB)

During his lifetime and for at least 200 years after his death, Francisco Guerrero was one of the most widely published and performed vocal composers of the Spanish Renaissance, second only to Victoria in reputation. From 1551 until his death he worked at Seville Cathedral, first as assistant director of music, then from 1574 as director. He travelled widely, and had his music published in several countries; it was much performed in the Spanish-American colonies. He wrote mainly vocal music, sacred and secular. Among his 150 or so published motets, *Ave Virgo sanctissima* (1566) enjoyed exceptional popularity. In fact it is slightly unusual among Guerrero's motets, its two top voice parts (placed left and right on this recording) being in strict canon throughout, the second exactly echoing the first at two bars' distance.

Ave Virgo sanctissima,
Dei Mater piissima,
Maris stella clarissima;
Salve semper gloriosa,
Margarita pretiosa,
Sicut lilium formosa,
Nitens, olens velut rosa.
(Anonymous medieval poem)

Hail, most holy Virgin,
Most pure Mother of God,
Brightest star of the sea;
Hail, ever-glorious one,
Precious pearl,
Fair as the lily,
Shining and fragrant as the rose.

3 **There is no rose of such virtue (English carol, *c.* 1420)**
(SAT)

The fifteenth-century musical manuscript containing this jewel among early English carols is in the form of a vellum roll more than six feet long, also containing other carols and mass settings. It was presented to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1838, and has been transcribed and published several times since then; its text is attractive enough in its own right to have been newly set to music by a number of composers, including Benjamin Britten in his *Ceremony of Carols*.

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu;
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
That he is God in persons three,
Pari forma.

The angels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo:
Gaudeamus.

Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus.

4 **Ave Maria (T. L. de Victoria, 1548–1611)**
(SATB)

Victoria has long been regarded as the greatest Spanish Renaissance composer, despite being both less prolific and less versatile than many of his contemporaries: virtually his entire output, all of it Latin church music, is contained in only eight volumes. He began his musical life as a choirboy at Avila Cathedral, then moved to Rome as a student and, later, director of music, at the Jesuit Collegio Germanico where he remained till about 1586, taking holy orders in 1575. Despite growing European fame from his published compositions, he then returned to Spain to take up the cloistered post offered to him by Philip II as choirmaster and later organist of a convent in Madrid where he remained until his death. Among his works are numerous settings of Marian texts. This charming four-voiced *Ave Maria* is probably one of his most-performed pieces, though doubts have been cast on its authenticity as it was never published in the composer's lifetime and is known only from a nineteenth-century edition.

Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus [Christus]. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

(Prayer before Divine Office)

(Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.)

5 **Ave Virgo gloriosa (Richard Dering, *c.* 1580–1630)**
(SSATB)

Richard Dering stands apart from the illustrious group of English composers active at the end of the sixteenth and start of the seventeenth centuries, by reason of exile. He is believed to have studied in England (he applied for an Oxford B.Mus degree in 1610), but in the increasingly anti-Catholic climate of the time, he, like a number of other English Catholics, decided to live abroad. By 1617 he was organist to the convent of English nuns in Brussels, and in that year published his first collection of *Cantiones sacrae*, from which this graceful motet is taken. Its simple, vivid expression of the text, without much contrapuntal elaboration, shows the influence of the new Italian Baroque style which Dering's compatriots in England were perhaps slower to embrace.

Ave Virgo gloriosa,	*Hail, glorious Virgin,*
Favo mellis dulcior:	*Sweeter than honey in the comb:*
Mater Dei gloriosa,	*Glorious Mother of God,*

Stella sole clarior:	*Brighter than the sun:*
Tu es illa speciosa,	*You are the fair one*
Qua nulla est pulchrior,	*None more beautiful,*
Rubicunda plus quam rosa,	*Redder than the rose,*
Lilio candidior.	*Whiter than the lily.*

(Anonymous medieval poem)

Part 2: from Candlemas to Holy Week

6 **Ave Regina caelorum (Gregorian chant)**
(T and B unis.)

Ave Regina caelorum,	*Hail, Queen of heaven,*
Ave Domina angelorum:	*Hail, Empress of the angels:*
Salve Radix, salve porta,	*Hail, root and gateway*
Ex qua mundo lux est orta:	*From which the light of the world came forth:*
Gaude Virgo gloriosa,	*Rejoice, glorious Virgin,*
Super omnes speciosa:	*Fair above all other:*
Vale, o valde decora,	*Farewell, O most lovely one,*
Et pro nobis Christum exora.	*And pray for us to Christ.*

(Antiphon of the BVM)

7 **Stabat Mater (G. P. da Palestrina, 1525–94)**
(double choir SATB: SATB)

The text of the *Stabat Mater*, with its gory imagery reminiscent of the 18th-century Pietistic verse uncomplainingly set to music by Bach in his cantatas and Passions, may be rather alien to present-day tastes; but its subject-matter, springing from a mother's grief at the violent death of her son, is both human and timeless. It found a place in the Catholic liturgy from the fifteenth century, and there are numerous musical settings. Palestrina's setting for double choir reputedly dates from 1589 or 1590, by which time the sexagenarian composer, then working as choirmaster of the Cappella Giulia at St Peter's in Rome, was revered as the greatest master of polyphonic composition in Europe. A certain amount of mystique soon attached itself to his *Stabat Mater*: according to legend, the manuscript was presented by the composer to the Sistine Chapel Choir for its exclusive performance every Good Friday, and the piece was never heard elsewhere until the English musician Charles Burney bribed a singer to show him a copy, which led to publication in England in 1771. In the nineteenth century, the composer Wagner published an edition replete with Romantic expression marks of his own.

In fact, the *Stabat mater* is not very typical of Palestrina's normal technique of composition, where

relatively short sections of text are stretched a long way in music by means of imitative counterpoint, every voice part having a turn with the melody. The text of the *Stabat Mater* is long, forcing Palestrina to deal with it more concisely than usual, with interest and variety coming from the contrasts and interplay of voices and textures available in the double choir medium. The result is a kind of dramatic fresco in music, filled with light and shade, an acknowledged masterpiece of Renaissance choral writing.

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.

The grieving Mother
Stood weeping by the cross
Where her Son hung.

Cujus animam gementem
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.

Her spirit crying out,
Mourning and grieving
Has been pierced by the sword.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti!

O how sad and afflicted
Was that blessed
Mother of the Only-begotten!

Quae mœrebat et dolebat,
Et tremebat, dum videbat
Nati pœnas inclyti.

How she grieved and lamented,
And trembled, when she saw
The sufferings of her glorious Son.

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto supplicio?

What man would not weep
If he saw the Mother of Christ
In such torment?

Quis non posset contristari,
Piam Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Who could fail to grieve too,
Seeing the blessed Mother
Suffering with her Son?

Pro peccatis suae gentis,
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.

For the sins of his people
She saw Jesus tortured
And scourged.

Vidit suum dulcem natum
Morientem, desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

She saw her sweet son,
Dying and forsaken
As he gave up his spirit.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris,
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, fount of love,
Make me feel the power of your grief
And mourn with you.

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
n amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam!

Make my heart burn
With the love of Christ
That I may please him.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

Holy Mother, may you inflict
The stripes of the crucified one
Deeply on my heart.

Tui nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum divide.

Of your wounded Son,
Who deigned to suffer for me,
Let me share the punishment.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere
Donec ego vixero.

Make me weep with you,
Grieve by the cross with you
As long as I live.

Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

To stand by the cross with you
To join with you
In lamenting is my desire.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.

Brightest Virgin of virgins,
May you not be harsh with me,
Make me grieve with you.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolere.

Make me bear the burden of Christ's death,
Make me share his Passion
And reflect on his wounds.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce fac inebriari
Et cruore Filii.

Make me suffer his wounds,
Let me be overcome by the cross
And the blood of your Son.

Inflammatus et accensus
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus,
In die judicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri,
Morte Christi praemuniri,
Confoveri gratia.

Quando corpus morietur,
Fac, ut animae donetur,
Paradisi gloria.

(13th-c. Franciscan poem)

Set on fire and burning,
May I be protected by you, Virgin,
On the day of judgement.

May I be guarded by the cross,
Fortified by the death of Christ,
Supported by his grace.

When my body dies,
Let there be granted to my soul
The glory of paradise.

8 **Ave Maria (Anton Bruckner, 1824–96)**
(SAATTBB)

(Text as for 4)

Born to a devout Austrian family, the son of an organist and a distinguished organist himself, Bruckner not unexpectedly wrote a significant amount of sacred choral music. The present *Ave Maria* (one of three settings he made of the text) was written in 1861 while the composer was organist of Linz Cathedral, and it marked the end of a period of contrapuntal studies during which Bruckner was forbidden by his teacher Sechter to write 'free' compositions. Released from the ban, his creativity flowered in this simple but powerful motet, rooted clearly in the Viennese tradition but pointing towards Bruckner's symphonic achievements to come.

9 **Laudi alla Vergine Maria (Giuseppe Verdi, 1813–1901)**
(SSAA)

Around 1890, between the composition of his two final operas *Otello* and *Falstaff*, Verdi made this setting of lines from the Paradise canto of *The Divine Comedy*. He had recently written an *Ave Maria*, and was soon to compose a *Stabat Mater* and a *Te Deum* which, between them, made up his swansong, the *Four sacred pieces*, first performed as a set in 1898. The *Laudi*, simple and chaste in expression, was written for four solo voices, but is more usually—and possibly more effectively—performed chorally.

Vergine madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,
umile ed alta più che creatura,
termine fisso d'eterno consiglio,
tu se' colei che l'umana natura nobilitasti sì,
che'l suo Fattore non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.

Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore,
per lo cui caldo nell'eterna pace
così è germinato questo fiore.

Qui se' a noi meridiana face di caritate,
e giuso, in tra i mortali, se' di speranza fontana vivace.

Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,
che qual vuol grazia, ed a te non ricorre,
sua disianza vuol volar senz' ali.

La tua benignità non pur soccorre a chi dimanda,

ma molte fiate liberamente al dimandar precorre.
In te misericordia, in te pietate, in te magnificenza,
in te s'aduna quantunque in creatura e di bontate.
Ave.

(Dante Alighieri, 1265–1321)

Virgin mother, daughter of your Son,
humble and exalted above all beings,
constant vessel of eternal counsel.
You are she who so ennobled human nature,
through whom His Creator did not disdain the incarnation.

In your womb was love rekindled,
from whose warmth, in eternal peace,
this flower did germinate.

You are to us the brightest torch of charity,
and amongst mortals a bubbling fountain of hope.

Lady, your greatness and worth are such,
that to seek for grace without coming to you
would be like trying to fly without wings.

Your graciousness not only succours those in need,
but also frequently freely anticipates our desires.
In you there is mercy, pity and magnificence,
reunited in you in flesh and in spirit.
Hail.

(Translation by Paul Gordon)

10 **Ave Maria (Igor Stravinsky, 1882–1971)**
(SATB)

(Text as for 4)

In 1926 Stravinsky rejoined the the Russian Orthodox church, from which he had been estranged for some time. The main musical fruit of his reconversion was the *Symphony of Psalms*, but he also wrote

three short unaccompanied sacred choruses, of which the *Ave Maria* (1934) was the last. Originally in Slavonic, it was adapted by the composer to the Latin text in 1949.

11 **Dostoino Yest (P. I. Tchaikovsky, 1840–93)**
(SATB)
Although choral music did not figure largely in Tchaikovsky's output, he contributed to the repertory of the Russian Orthodox church with a small number of characteristic works, the most substantial being his setting of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom of 1879. Soon after this he wrote nine sacred pieces for unaccompanied mixed chorus, of which *Dostoino Yest* (1884) is no. 5. Its mood is reverent, its texture sonorous, revealing on a small scale Tchaikovsky's all-too-little exercised mastery of the choral medium.

Dostoino yest' yako vo istinu blazhit'i Tya, Bogoroditsu,
prisnoblazhennuyu i preneporochnuyu, i Mater Boga nashego;
chestnyeishuyu kheruvim'
i slavnyeishuyu byez sravnyeniya serafim';
byez istlyeniya Boga slova rozhdshuyu,
sushchuyu Bogoroditsu, Tya vyelichayem. I vsyekh, i vsya.

(Verily it is meet that we should honour Thee, O Virgin,
who art ever-blessed and supremely immaculate, and Mother of our God;
Thou who art more honourable than the cherubim
and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim;
Thou who art the undefiled giver of birth to God the Word,
and most true Mother of God, we magnify Thee. Amen.)

(Translation by Bruce Hamilton)

Part 3: Easter to the Sunday after Pentecost

12 **Regina caeli laetare (Gregorian chant)**
(T and B unis.)

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia:	*Queen of heaven rejoice, alleluia:*
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia:	*Because he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia:*
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.	*Rose from the dead, as promised, alleluia:*
(Antiphon of the BVM)	*Pray for us to God, alleluia.*

13 **Regina caeli (Herbert Howells, 1892–1983)**
(double choir SATB: SATB)

(Text as for 12)

During his tenure of office at the then very new Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster, R. R. Terry actively encouraged composers to write for his much admired cathedral choir. In 1914 Howells, then a composition pupil of Stanford at the Royal College of Music, was recommended by him to Terry, and in that year Howells wrote a *Nunc dimittis* for Terry's choir. Two years later he wrote them four 'Anthems of the Blessed Virgin Mary', of which the *Regina caeli* was the third. The anthems were not published at the time, and were forgotten for many years until rediscovery of a manuscript copy led to publication in 1988. Richly laid out for double choir, the music is perfectly calculated for the very reverberant acoustic of the cathedral: after a fanfare-like opening filled with Easter joy, there follows a blazing climax on the words 'resurrexit sicut dixit', then the music subsides to a peaceful conclusion, entirely appropriately since the anthem would have been sung at the end of Compline, the final evening office of Easter Day.

14 **Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary**
(17th-c. Italian melody, arranged by Charles Wood, 1866–1926)
(SATB)
This delightful choral miniature is built on an Italian melody from a collection called *Corona di sacre Canzoni o Laude Spirituali*, published in Florence in 1689. It comes from *An Italian Carol Book* (1920), one of several significant collections of carols and hymns co-edited by Wood (Stanford's successor as Professor of Music at Cambridge University) and Woodward, an Anglican clergyman and antiquarian.

Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!
For so when he did greet thee,
Spake mighty Gabriel
And thus we greet thee.
Come weal, come woe,
Our hymn shall never vary.
Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!

Ave, ave Maria!
To gladden priest and people,
The angelus shall ring
From ev'ry steeple,
To sound his Virgin-birth,
Alleluia!
Ave, ave Maria!

Archangels chant Osanna,
And Holy, Holy, Holy,
Before the Infant born
Of thee, thou lowly
Aye-maiden child
Of Joachim and Anna;
Archangels chant Osanna.

(G. R. Woodward, 1848–1934)

15 **Hymne à la Vierge (Pierre Villette, 1926–98)**
(SATB)

Pierre Villette's life in music was divided between composition, teaching and musical administration; until 1990 he was director of the Darius Milhaud Conservatoire in Aix-en-Provence. Like his older contemporary Duruflé, his compositional output was small but fastidiously crafted, with a variety of choral music amongst it. *Hymne à la Vierge* (1954) is one of a set of seven unaccompanied motets, clearly related to the sound-world of Poulenc, yet with a melodic charm and harmonic piquancy all its own.

O toute belle Vierge Marie
Votre âme trouve en Dieu

Le parfait amour.
Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce
Comme une fiancée
Parée de ses joyaux.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur
Car tu as pris soin de moi,
Car tu m'as enveloppée du voile de 1'innocence.

Vous êtes née avant les collines
O sagesse de Dieu,
Porte du Salut;
Heureux celui qui marche dans vos traces
Qui apprête son coeur
A la voix de vos conseils.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur,
Car tu m'as faite, avant le jour,
Car tu m'as fait précéder le jaillissement des sources.

Avant les astres Vous étiez présente,
Mère du Createur
Au profond du ciel;
Quand Dieu fixait les limites du monde
Vous partagiez son coeur
Etant à 1'oeuvre avec lui.
O toute belle Vierge Marie.

(Roland Bouhéret)

(O fairest Virgin Mary, your soul finds the perfect love in God. He clothes you with the mantle of grace, like a bride adorned with her jewels. Alleluia, alleluia, I will sing your praise, Lord, for you have cared for me, you have wrapped me in the veil of purity.
You were born before the hills were made, O wisdom of God, gate of salvation. Happy is the man who follows in your footsteps, who makes his heart ready to hear the voice of your counsels. Alleluia, alleluia, I will sing your praise, Lord, for you created me before the day, before the bubbling of the streams.

You were there before the stars were made, Mother of God, in the heights of heaven; when God decreed the boundaries of the world, you were there in his heart and with him in his handiwork. O fairest Virgin Mary.)

16 **Magnificat (Giles Swayne, *b.* 1946)**
(double choir SATB: SATB)

Among the generation of English composers to emerge in the 1970s, Giles Swayne must be reckoned one of the most individual. Early studies at Cambridge with Nicholas Maw, later lessons with Harrison Birtwistle and Alan Bush, visits to Messiaen's composition class in Paris and time spent in Africa studying its traditional musics have nourished a wide-ranging musical imagination. Among his choral pieces, the *Magnificat* (1982) is one of the earliest to be influenced by African music: the rumbustious melody heard at the opening is based on a Jola ploughing-song from Senegal. The music then quickly develops into a kaleidoscopic mosaic of sound, built up very effectively for double choir from simple, detached fragments of melody, eventually coming to rest on a single high A for solo soprano.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae. Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius. Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

(Luke 1, vv.46–55)

(My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.)

(Translation from the Book of Common Prayer, 1662)

Part 4: Trinity to Advent

17 **Salve Regina (Gregorian chant)**
(T and B unis.)

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae: vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus, exsules, filii Hevae. Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo, Advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende. O clemens: O pia: O dulcis Virgo Maria.

(Antiphon of the BVM)

(Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy: hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. We cry to you, exiles, children of Eve. We sigh to you, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, O our Advocate, your merciful eyes towards us. And, after this exile is over, show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb. O kind, O holy, O sweet Virgin Mary.)

18 **Alleluia, Ave Maria (William Byrd, 1543–1623)**
(SSATB)

No one really knows how William Byrd, for all that he was acknowledged at the time (and now) as the greatest English composer of his day, was able to write and publish music openly intended for the Catholic liturgy at a time when the practice of that faith was illegal in England. It is indeed possible that he was protected by the favour of Queen Elizabeth; but his most 'Catholic' collection, the *Gradualia*, was published in the more rabidly anti-Catholic period of James I's reign—Volume 1, indeed (from which *Alleluia, Ave Maria* comes), actually in the year of the Gunpowder Plot, 1605. Byrd's intention in the *Gradualia* was to provide music for all occasions of the Church's year, and this motet is typical of many in the collection: concise, unostentatious and devout in expression, with a texture fluidly alternating between skilfully woven polyphony and simple block chords.

Alleluia. Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus. Alleluia. Virga Jesse floruit: Virgo Deum et hominem genuit: pacem Deus reddidit, reconcilians ima summis. Alleluia.

(Alleluia verses for Feasts of the BVM)

(Alleluia. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you: you are blessed among women. Alleluia. The rod of Jesse has flowered: a Virgin has brought forth God and man: God has given us peace, reconciling the highest and the lowest.)

19 **Vidi speciosam (T. L. de Victoria, 1548–1611)**
(SSATTB)

This expansive motet, published in 1572, shows Victoria's writing at its sunniest. The (literally) flowery text, its imagery recalling the Song of Songs and the Classical myth of Aphrodite rising from the waters, inspired the composer to a quite 'secular' madrigalian setting, with effective use of contrasts between high and low groups of voices, some word-painting here and there, and a clear-cut structure with recurring refrain-like sections inserted, one suspects, more to catch the ear than to inspire devotion.

Vidi speciosam, sicut columbam, ascendentem desuper rivos aquarum, cuius inaestimabilis odor erat nimis in vestimentis eius: Et sicut dies verni circumdabant earn flores rosarum et lilia convallium. Quae est ista quae ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae et thuris? Et sicut dies verni circumdabant eal flores rosarum et lilia convallium.
(Antiphon at the Feast of the Assumption)

(I saw a fair lady, like a dove, rising above the waters, whose raiment was filled with priceless fragrance: and like a spring day, she was surrounded by roses and lilies of the valley. Who is she who rises over the barren land like a plume of scented myrrh and frankincense? And like a spring day she was surrounded by roses and lilies of the valley.)

20 **Ave Maria (Gustav Holst, 1874–1934)**
(double choir SSAA: SSAA)

(Text as for 4)

In 1900 when Holst wrote this soaring, radiant piece for women's choir, he had not long completed his studies at the Royal College of Music in London, and was earning a meagre living as a trombonist in a touring opera orchestra. It was the first of his compositions to attract public attention, being commended by the *Times* critic as 'scholarly', and earning the approval of Holst's lifelong friend Vaughan Williams. Stanford, one of Holst's former teachers, might well have been impressed by its flowing, melodious lines so skilfully interwoven, closely similar in style to Stanford's own *Beati quorum via* written five years later.

21 **Ave Maria (T. L. de Victoria, 1548–1611)**
(double choir SATB: SATB)

(Text as for 4)

Victoria seems to have been especially proud of this spacious and impressive motet for double choir: originally published in 1572, it was reissued by him in later publications of 1576, 1585 and 1600, perhaps in response to public demand. It makes an interesting contrast to his four-part setting of the same text: less intimate and devotional, perhaps, but richer and more sonorous, fit to take its place in a cathedral's celebrations of a great Marian feast day. Its sectional structure (with a characteristic triple-time passage) perhaps even points towards the Venetian splendours of Gabrieli.

Photo: David E. Henderson

The Cambridge Singers
in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral

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